

tribal and ancestral spirits. Instead. For upon such animism is founded the whole fabric of Wemba religion."/ The ancestral spirits whom the Awemba and all other tribes of this region worship may be divided into two main classes,, First come the spirits of departed chiefs, who are publicly worshipped by the whole tribe ; and second come the spirits of near relations who are worshipped privately by each head of a family/' " Among the Awemba there is no special shrine for these purely family spirits, who are worshipped inside the hut, and to whom family sacrifice of a sheep, a goat, or a fowl is made, the spirit receiving the blood spilt on the ground, while all the members of the family partake of the flesh together. For a religious Wemba man the cult of the spirit of his nearest relations (of his grandparents, or of his deceased father, mother, elder brother, or maternal uncle) is considered quite sufficient. Out of these spirit relatives a man will worship one whom he considers as his special familiar, for various reasons. For instance, the diviner may have told him that his last illness was caused because he had not respected the spirit of his uncle ; accordingly he will be careful in future to adopt his uncle as his tutelary spirit As a mark of such respect he may devote a cow or a goat to one of the spirits of his ancestors. Holding the fowl, for instance, in his hands, he will dedicate it, asking the spirit to come and abide in it, upon which the fowl is let go, and is afterwards called by the name of the spirit. If the necessities, however, of the larder demand that it should be killed, another animal

is taken, and the spirit is asked to accept it as a substitute ! Before beginning any special task, such as hoeing a new garden, or going on a journey, Wemba men invoke their tutelary spirits to be with them and to assist their efforts, in short ejaculatory prayers usually couched in a set formula. Among many of the tribes in the North Luangwa district longer formal prayers are still made to all the deceased ancestors of the clan at the time of harvest, asking them to protect the crops and to drive away illnesses and evil spirits from

<sup>1</sup> C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, <sup>2</sup> C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia*, (London, 1911), pp. 50 sq. pp. 52 sq.